



# JESUITS

Central and Southern

Summer 2021

## **CALLED BY NAME:** Jesuit Ordinations

Ignatian Year | Belize Prison Ministry | Service in Kyrgyzstan



Dear Friends in the Lord,

Have you been cancelled yet?

If you haven't, just hold tight; it's coming soon. I was cancelled recently, and in turn cancelled a few other people, and then someone tried to cancel me, but I cancelled them first!

You have to keep a sense of humor about these things, and at the same time recognize the seriousness of the societal issues that our cancel culture is trying to confront. However, the history of our faith shows us that the way forward is transformation, not cancellation.

The heroes of our faith could all have been cancelled for their lack of virtue. God could easily have "cancelled" David, the adulterer complicit in the murder of one of his own soldiers, Uriah. Jesus had every reason to "cancel" Peter, but instead chose to focus on Peter's goodness, not his cowardice. The list goes on, but Jesus' legacy is seeing the human person as fundamentally good and capable of reformation.

We began an Ignatian Year on May 20, the 500th anniversary of the events that transformed St. Ignatius, a man whose temper, narcissism and military ambition faded when he encountered a loving and merciful God. God did not cancel Ignatius, and we are grateful!

In this issue of the magazine, you will read the stories of Jesuits who continue to believe that people can transform their lives – whether in the prisons of Belize, the mountains of Kyrgyzstan or the classrooms of Saint Louis University. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Jesuits are transformed by the recognition that they are loved sinners – broken and flawed yet loved by God. That was the key insight that transformed St. Ignatius, and it is the gift we "Sons of Ignatius" try to offer to all we encounter.

As we enter this Ignatian Year, I encourage you to engage "the faith that does justice," but always with an eye toward transforming others, rather than cancelling them.

Speaking of the faith that does justice, this issue recognizes Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ, a tireless advocate and prophetic voice for the poor and marginalized. I can't begin to count the number of lives he has transformed! Thank you, Fred!

Gratefully in the Lord,

Thomas P. Greene, SJ  
Provincial

Queridos hermanos en el Señor.

¿Ya te han cancelado?

Entonces agárrate fuerte porque pronto lo harán. Hace poco me cancelaron a mí, y a su vez cancelaron a otras personas, y luego alguien intentó cancelarme, ¡pero yo le cancelé primero! Hay que mantener el sentido del humor sobre estas cosas y, al mismo tiempo, reconocer la seriedad de los problemas sociales que nuestra cultura de la cancelación está tratando de afrontar. Sin embargo, la historia de nuestra fe nos muestra que el camino a seguir es la transformación, no la cancelación.

Todos los héroes de nuestra fe podrían haber sido cancelados por su falta de virtud. Dios podría haber "cancelado" fácilmente a David, el adúltero cómplice del asesinato de uno de sus propios soldados, Urías. Jesús tenía todas las razones para "cancelar" a Pedro, pero en su lugar eligió mirar su bondad y no su cobardía. La lista continúa, pero el legado de Jesús es ver en los seres humanos personas fundamentalmente buenas y capaces de reformarse.

Comenzamos el Año Ignaciano el 20 de mayo, celebrando el 500° aniversario de los acontecimientos que transformaron a San Ignacio, un hombre cuyo temperamento, narcisismo y ambición militar se desvanecieron cuando se encontró con un Dios amoroso y misericordioso. Dios no canceló a Ignacio, ¡y estamos agradecidos!

En este número de la revista hallarás historias de jesuitas que siguen creyendo que las personas pueden transformar sus vidas, ya sea en las cárceles de Belice, en las montañas de Kirguistán o en las aulas de la Universidad de San Luis. En los *Ejercicios Espirituales*, los jesuitas se transforman al reconocer que son pecadores queridos, quebrados y con defectos, pero amados por Dios. Esa fue la idea clave que transformó a San Ignacio, y es el regalo que los "Hijos de Ignacio" intentamos ofrecer a todos los que encontramos.

Al iniciarse este Año Ignaciano, los animo a comprometerse con "la fe que hace justicia", pero siempre con la mirada puesta en transformar a los demás, en lugar de cancelarnos.

Hablando de la fe que hace justicia, este número reconoce al P. Fred Kammer, SJ, un incansable defensor y voz inspiradora de los pobres y marginados. No puedo contar el número de vidas que ha transformado. ¡Gracias, Fred!

Con gratitud en el Señor,

Thomas P. Greene, SJ  
Provincial





**Jesuits Central and Southern  
Volume VIII • Number 2  
Summer 2021**

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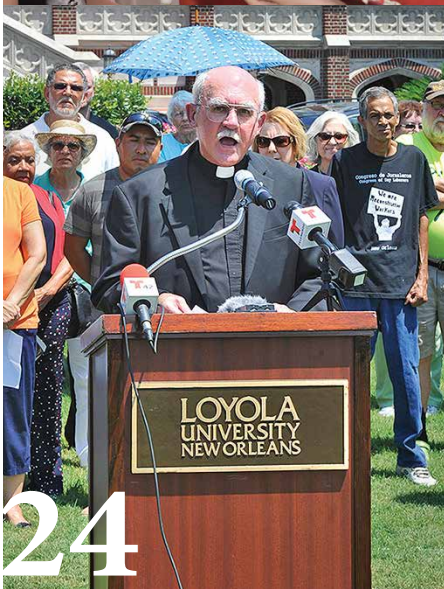
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Jesuits is published and distributed by  
the Jesuits of the Central and Southern  
Province of the Society of Jesus.  
4511 West Pine Boulevard  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108-2191  
314-361-7765  
jesuitscentralsouthern.org

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Cover: Father James Page, SJ, bows at  
the altar during his first consecration  
as a priest, June 12, 2021.



**2 | Province News**

**4 | Province Joins Worldwide  
Celebration of Ignatian Year**

**8 | Called by Name**  
Five Jesuits of the Province Ordained

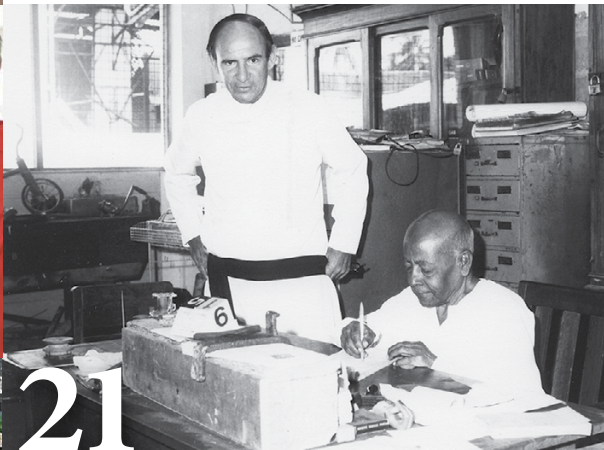
**12 | Healing the Scars of Violence**  
Prison Ministry in Belize

**14 | Meet our Men in Formation**

**16 | Fidelity and Patience**  
Fr. Anthony Corcoran, SJ, in Kyrgyzstan

**20 | "Care for the Caregivers"**  
Workshop for Secondary Ed Leaders

**21 | The End of an Era**  
Jesuit Missions in Ceylon



**22 | Man in Formation**  
Jon Polce, SJ

**23 | Man at Work**  
Fr. Michael Rozier, SJ

**24 | A Tribute to Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ**

**26 | The Teacher**

**28 | In Memoriam**

Inside Back Cover | My Prayer Place

## Descendants of Jesuit Slaveholding and Jesuits of the United States Announce Historic Partnership

In a landmark undertaking in the pursuit of racial healing and justice, Descendants of individuals enslaved by Jesuits and the Jesuits of the United States on March 15 announced a partnership to create the Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation ([www.descendants.org](http://www.descendants.org)).

The Foundation is the fruit of several years of a powerful dialogue process assisted by the Kellogg Foundation. It is a first-of-its-kind partnership among the Descendants of the enslaved and the successors of the enslavers. Its foremost mission is to promote and support programs that advance racial healing and reconciliation and further racial justice in America. It will also provide educational and healthcare assistance to Descendants.

“The enduring legacy of Jesuit slaveholding calls us Jesuits to a responsibility to help create a new future together with Descendants and descendant communities,” said Fr. Provincial Thomas P. Greene, SJ. “Our history binds us to the people whose forced labor helped build our early apostolates. It is our prayer that the Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation will create a pathway to reconciliation and healing, not only for the descendants of the people enslaved by Jesuits, but for our country.”



## SLU Breaks Ground on New Jesuit Center

Saint Louis University broke ground this spring on a new residence for Jesuits who serve the campus community. Father Provincial Thomas P. Greene, SJ, participated in the ceremony along with university leaders and construction partners.

The on-campus building has been designed as a residence and meeting place for Jesuits missioned to the university. In addition to private rooms for 20 residents, the new building will include guest accommodations, a chapel, common areas and meeting rooms. Construction is scheduled for completion in late 2022.

## New Provincial Assistant for Healthcare



Eileen Croghan is the new provincial assistant for health care for the Jesuits USA Central and

Southern Province. She began in this critical position after working with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in a similar role. Prior to that, she worked in healthcare quality, clinical operations (for a group of 100+ physicians) and healthcare case management. Ms. Croghan is a registered nurse with a bachelor's degree in nursing and a Master of Business Administration. She replaces Ana Casey, who served the province with compassion and skill for seven years.



## New Chief Advancement Officer to Lead Province Fundraising

Paula Parrish, an experienced fund-

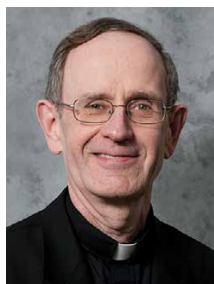
raising professional, has joined the province as chief advancement officer. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, Ms. Parrish has most recently worked as a consultant, assisting such nonprofits as Rotary Downtown Fort Worth, Leadership Fort Worth, Cristo Rey Fort Worth Catholic High School, Fort Worth Opera, Loreto House Pregnancy Center and Children At Risk-North Texas. She previously served as the executive director of the Advancement Foundation of the Diocese of Fort Worth. She replaces John Fitzpatrick. Ms. Parrish began with the province on July 1.



## Milestones and Transitions



Juan Ruiz, SJ, was ordained to the diaconate on May 29, 2021, at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Toronto, Ontario. Most Rev. Terrence Prendergast, SJ, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Hearst-Moosonee, presided.



Former Provincial Ronald A. Mercier, SJ, has been named the delegate for formation for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. The delegate for formation assists the Conference president and provincials and coordinates combined formation programming. Father Mercier will begin his new assignment on Aug. 15, 2021.

## Days of Reflection

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province will offer the following Days of Reflection for benefactors and friends this year:



### Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House

Lake Dallas, Texas

**Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

*Fr. Roy Joseph, SJ, presenting*

### Manresa House of Retreats

Convent, Louisiana

**Tuesday, September 28, 2021**

*Fr. Greg Waldrop, SJ, presenting*

**Wednesday, September 29, 2021**

*Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ, presenting*

### Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center

Houston, Texas

**Monday, October 11, 2021**

*Fr. Randy Gibbens, SJ, presenting*



The day begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and ends around 3:00 p.m.

Breakfast and lunch provided.

Mass will be celebrated.

These events are free, but space is limited, so please reserve your spot.

**Call: 800-325-9924**

and ask for Pat or Ana.

# Province Joins Worldwide Society of Jesus in IGNATIAN YEAR CELEBRATION

By Therese Fink Meyerhoff

**O**n May 20, 2021, the worldwide Society of Jesus and the extended Ignatian family began an “Ignatian Year,” a 14-month celebration of the conversion of St. Ignatius Loyola that runs through the Feast of St. Ignatius, July 31, 2022.

It was on May 20, 1521 – 500 years ago – that Ignatius of Loyola was wounded by a cannonball while defending Pamplona during a siege by the French. His wounds would change the trajectory of his life. This “cannonball moment” began his conversion from soldier/courtier to pilgrim/priest and one of the founders of the Society of Jesus.

“It seems odd to celebrate the day that our founder’s leg was shattered by a cannonball, yet we know of the overwhelming good that has flowed from such a painful episode in the life of Ignatius,” said Fr. Provincial Thomas P. Greene, SJ.

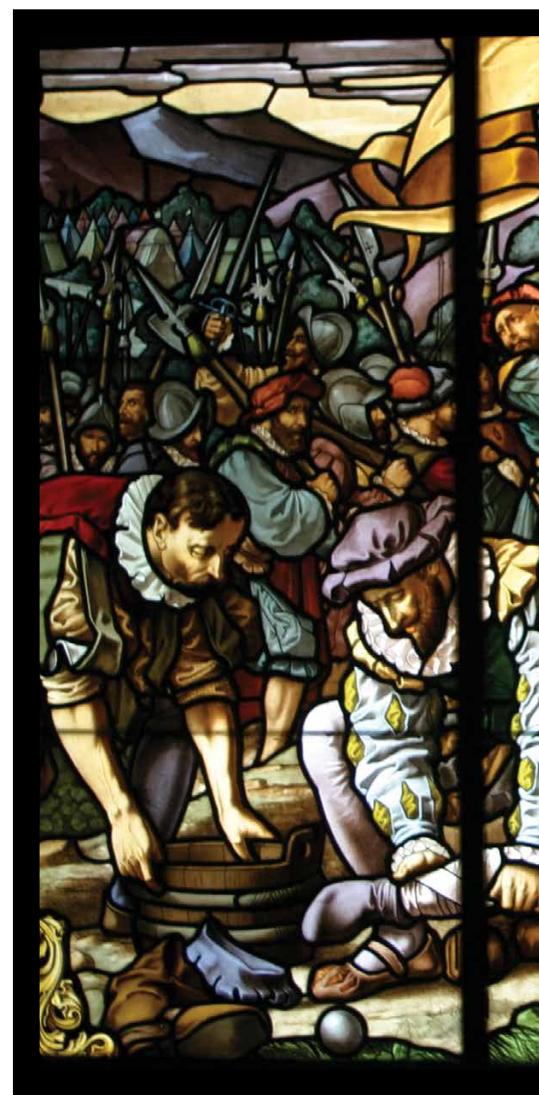
“Together with our friends and the whole Church, the universal Society wants to remember that privileged moment when the Holy Spirit inspired Ignatius of Loyola in his decision to follow Christ, and to deepen our understanding of this pilgrim way in order to ‘draw fruit’

from it,” wrote Jesuit Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa in his letter declaring the Ignatian Year.

“It is my desire that at the heart of this Ignatian Year we would hear the Lord calling us, and we would allow him to work our conversion inspired by the personal experience of Ignatius.”

The motto of the Ignatian Year is “*To see all things new in Christ.*” The commemorative year is meant to be a time of discernment and conversion, not just for Jesuits, but for anyone interested in deepening her/his relationship with God.

“We want to invite people to this different way of celebrating,” said Fr. Hung Pham, SJ, the coordinator of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province’s Ignatian Year celebration. “The Ignatian Year is calling us to deeper relationships, with the Lord, yes, but also with each other.”



## Provincial Pilgrimage

In response to Fr. General Sosa’s invitation to “deepen our understanding of this pilgrim way,” Fr. Greene will make a yearlong pilgrimage through the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province.

His pilgrimage, *Tracing the Footprints of God*, will begin this August in Grand Coteau, La. Over the course of the coming months, Fr. Greene will journey to Denver, Belize, New Orleans, Kansas City, Mo., Puerto Rico, St. Louis, Houston and El Paso, Texas. In each location, Jesuits, friends and colleagues will be invited to come together for an event based on the Spiritual Exercises – the greatest fruit of St. Ignatius’ own conversion.





## Tracing the Footprints of God

Journey with Fr. Tom Greene, SJ, on his pilgrimage to Grand Coteau, La., Denver, Belize, New Orleans, Kansas City, Mo., Puerto Rico, St. Louis, Houston and El Paso, Texas.

### An Invitation

In the Conversion Chapel in Loyola, where Ignatius recovered from his injuries, the words “*Aquí Se Entregó a Dios*” are painted on the beam above his bed. The inscription is a reminder to the visitor that here, in this place, Ignatius “gave himself” to God.

The Ignatian Year is an opportunity to contemplate one’s own place of conversion, or perhaps to begin anew the process of giving oneself to God. It is also a time to celebrate all that has come from the conversion of St. Ignatius Loyola – please join us as you are able!

“It will be like a yearlong retreat with the provincial,” Fr. Pham said. “And everyone is invited!”

Each event will begin with a composition of place. In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius invited people to use all their senses while reflecting on a scripture passage, to create a well-developed sense of “place” in order to put oneself in the scene. The UCS Province – which includes 13 states, Puerto Rico and Belize – features diverse geography, cultures, languages and customs. This diversity will be recognized with a unique presentation in each place.

“Our composition of place will not just be a celebration of all that is good in each location. We will also



The Conversion Chapel in Loyola, Spain, where Ignatius recovered from his injuries.

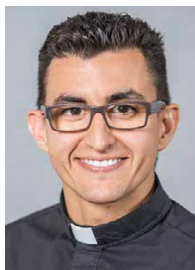
**MORE**  
ON THE WEB

The province website has a page dedicated to the Ignatian Year. We invite you to visit [www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/spirituality/ignatian-year/](http://www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/spirituality/ignatian-year/). Plan to return throughout the year for news, stories and events.

# Province Launches OFFICE OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY



Fr. Hung Pham, SJ



Fr. José Ruiz, SJ



Patty Feder

In addition to the usual pastoral traits, an assignment at St. Peter Claver Parish in Punta Gorda, Belize, requires stamina and ingenuity. This parish, located in the far south of the Central American country, serves not only the members of the main church, but also the faithful Catholics in a scattering of 36 far-flung villages.

In recent years, the Jesuits serving in Punta Gorda have identified a new concern, beyond even the tough terrain and the poverty of the people: conflict between evangelical Christians and Catholics. According to Fr. Matt Ruhl, SJ, pastor of St. Peter Claver, some evangelical Christian groups assail the villagers with false and misleading messages designed to attract them away from the Catholic Church. In response, the Jesuits of Belize are redoubling their own evangelization efforts. They've turned to the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province's new Office of Ignatian Spirituality for help.

The Office of Ignatian Spirituality (OIS) was officially launched on May 20, 2021, the first day of the Society of Jesus' Ignatian Year, but it was several years in the making.

"We are the fruit of the discernment of people throughout the province going back five years or more," said Fr. Hung Pham, SJ, the director of the OIS. Father Pham also serves the province as provincial assistant for formation, the term used for Jesuit training, generally the 14-18 years from the time of entrance to final vows. His dual roles acknowledge the province's commitment to provide spiritual formation not only to Jesuits, but to Jesuit colleagues,

religious women and men and lay people who practice Ignatian Spirituality.

Father Pham is joined in the OIS by Fr. José Ruiz, SJ, and Patty Feder.

In Punta Gorda, the OIS assisted the Jesuits of Belize, including Fr. Ruhl and Fr. Brian Christopher, SJ, the local superior, by providing an intensive Ignatian formation program for lay colleagues. They began with a small group of about 12 people active in the parish. Later, that group was joined by another 70 or so community leaders, head teachers, principals and catechists. They met every day for nearly 10 hours in order to fully form the lay people in Ignatian Spirituality.

"For the retreatants, the experience was as rigorous as it was eye-opening," Fr. Ruhl said. "And now we have a foundational Ignatian experience that we can and shall build upon."

The scale of this retreat, with about 100 participants, was beyond the capacity of the Jesuits of Belize on their own. That's where the OIS came in.

"We called on our network," Fr. Pham said of recruiting a team of nine other spiritual directors from Jesuits in formation, the Christian Life Community (CLC), Lightworks, the Ignatian Spirituality Program of Denver and *Instituto Formación Ignaciana* (IFI) of Puerto Rico.

"This is what the OIS is called to do – network and collaborate," Fr. Pham said.

"Working in Belize was a real blessing," said Fr. Ruiz, one of the nine-member team made up of three Jesuits and six lay collaborators. "I remember Sam (Fr. Sam Wilson, SJ, associate pastor of St. Peter Claver) talking about the need for formation and struggling to put something together while tending to more than 30 chapels. It was a real joy for







"This is what the OIS  
is called to do –  
network and collaborate."

– Fr. Hung Pham, SJ

Jesuits Pepe Ruiz (left), Hung Pham (center) and  
Ian Peoples (right) are joined by the rest of the  
retreat leadership team in Punta Gorda, Belize.

me as his friend to witness God's action in a place with so much need. It was like bringing water to a dry desert, every ounce was soaked in avidly. We left with a great sense of hope for the people there, and a sense that their spiritual lives had taken a step forward."

## The Fruit of Discernment

In February 2020, Fr. Ronald A. Mercier, SJ, then-provincial of the UCS Province, released a plan for the province's apostolic works: *Engaging a Changed and Changing Context: Toward an Apostolic Plan*. The plan emphasizes spiritual depth as a guiding principle for the province's – and Jesuits' – future.

Building on this foundation, current provincial Fr. Thomas P. Greene, SJ, sought input from Jesuits and collaborators to determine what kind of ministry was needed and possible, and the Office of Ignatian Spirituality was born. Its mandate is to:

- Network: Organize networking among ministries doing the direct ministry of the Spiritual Exercises, as well as those ministries who train Jesuits and others in the ministry.
- Collaborate: Consult with and provide guidance to current ministries and programs that promote the Spiritual Exercises and Ignatian Spirituality.
- Discern: Listen to what God is calling the province to do related to leading people to God through the Spiritual Exercises.

Concretely, this mission will be lived by offering the Spiritual Exercises in ways the province's retreat houses

and spirituality centers do not, such as virtual retreats, and provide spiritual formation to Jesuits, Jesuit colleagues and others.

In addition, it will work with institutions struggling to share and foster the Spiritual Exercises to develop strategies and means for such ministry, as it did in Punta Gorda.

The Office of Ignatian Spirituality animates the Society of Jesus' Universal Apostolic Preference to "show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment."

"We are meant to create the space and to fill in the gaps and respond to the needs around the province as we listen," Fr. Pham said. "It's really exciting: we are committed to being flexible and open to whatever the Lord is calling us to do."

The OIS began programming with virtual Advent Retreats in English and Vietnamese and an Epiphany Retreat in Spanish. It has also offered online Lenten retreats and specific education in Ignatian Spirituality.

"We are empowering our colleagues as well as Jesuits," said Fr. Pham. "We are forming the formators."

The OIS staff has also begun pulling together the many institutions and groups within the province that offer the Spiritual Exercises in some form. It is Fr. Pham's hope that this "consortium" will grow in collaboration so that one's strength can bolster another's shortfall.

"We are creating a space where people can come to encounter the Lord and each other," Fr. Pham said. "We are building companionship so that we can dream together."



Learn more about the office and its programming at  
[www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/spirituality/ois](http://www.JesuitsCentralSouthern.org/spirituality/ois).





# CALLED BY NAME:

## Five Jesuits of the Province Ordained

*By Therese Fink Meyerhoff*

During the Rite of Ordination, there is a simple and profoundly beautiful moment when each ordinand is called by name and presented to the ordaining prelate. Once assured of the men's worthiness, the bishop says, "Relying on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose these, our brothers, for the Order of the Priesthood." The superior replies, "Thanks be to God."

And the congregation cheers.

Thanks be to God, indeed. There's reason to cheer – even in a church – because the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province gained five new priests in June. Twenty-five Jesuits were ordained for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. But more importantly, we the Church gained 25 new priests. These men are indeed worthy. They were chosen, not just by the Society of Jesus, or the Roman Catholic Church; they were chosen by God.





The newest priests of the province, Jesuits Brian Strassburger, James Page, Chris Kellerman and Louis Hotop flank Fr. Provincial Tom Greene, SJ, following their ordination on June 12, 2021.

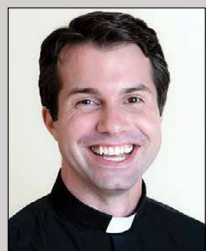
**F**ather Daniel Mora Arenas, SJ, was ordained on Thursday, June 3, 2021, at San Javier (Francis Xavier) Parish in Bogotá, Colombia. The Archbishop of Bogotá, Mons. Luis José Rueda, presided at the sacred liturgy. A native of Colombia, Fr. Mora did his theology studies in Bogotá.

Jesuits Louis Hotop, Christopher Kellerman, James Page and Brian Strassburger were ordained at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in New Orleans, on Saturday, June 12, 2021. The Most Reverend Gregory Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans, presided.



Father Daniel Mora, SJ, (center) celebrates his priestly ordination with Fr. José Domingo Cuesta Cañate, provincial of the Jesuits Central American Province, and Archbishop Luis José Rueda.

With gratitude to God, we introduce the newest priests of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province:



**Father Louis R. Hotop, SJ**, came to know the Jesuits while a student at St. Louis University High School in St. Louis. In his teens, Fr. Hotop was active in service groups and in campus ministry at school. These activities helped to form and solidify his desire to dedicate his life to the good of others, and he entered the Society right out of high school.

Father Hotop earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and Russian studies at Saint Louis University, spending a summer with the Jesuits and the Catholic communities in Siberia. His ministerial experience was at St. John's College in Belize City, Belize, and at Arrupe Jesuit High School in Denver. While earning a Master of Divinity degree at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif., he worked with the homeless on the streets of San Francisco through an outreach program called the Gubbio Project.

After ordination, Fr. Hotop will serve in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, ministering to migrant communities on the U.S.-Mexico border and helping with sacramental supply in diocesan parishes.





**Father Christopher Kellerman, SJ**, was born in Arlington, Texas, and attended Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, where he studied music and political science and was an active member of the Catholic Student Association. He began seriously discerning a religious vocation while earning his master's degree in theology at the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas. He entered the Society of Jesus in 2011.

Following ordination, Fr. Kellerman will serve as a priest at Immaculate Conception Parish in Baton Rouge, while serving as interim director of JSRI in New Orleans.

Father Kellerman's ministerial experience was at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver. He then earned his Master of Divinity degree at Regis College at the University of Toronto. For the past year, he has been a visiting research fellow at the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) at Loyola University New Orleans, as well as serving as a deacon at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Baton Rouge, La.

Following ordination, Fr. Kellerman will serve as a priest at Immaculate Conception Parish in Baton Rouge, while serving as interim director of JSRI in New Orleans.



**Father Daniel Mora Arenas, SJ**, was born and raised in Palmira, Colombia. He studied public accounting at the Jesuits' *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana* in Cali, Colombia, and after graduation, worked as a financial auditor for several years. He entered the Society of Jesus in 2009 in the Dominican Republic.

Father Mora spent two years in Chicago studying English and philosophy. He also served at St. Procopius Parish as a confirmation catechist and accompanied a Christian Life Community called "Spanglish CLC" for Latino students at Loyola University Chicago. His regency – ministerial experience – was at Colegio San Ignacio in Puerto Rico, where he served as an assistant in the community service office and taught a class for seniors called "Magis commitment."

Father Mora studied theology in Colombia at the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. He served as a deacon in the Jesuit parish of St. Francis Xavier in Bogotá while finishing his Bachelor of Theology from the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. After ordination, he will serve as associate pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in El Paso, Texas.

Father Mora studied theology in Colombia at the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. He served as a deacon in the Jesuit parish of St. Francis Xavier in Bogotá while finishing his Bachelor of Theology from the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. After ordination, he will serve as associate pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in El Paso, Texas.



Fr. Daniel Mora, SJ, lies prostrate during his ordination in Bogotá, Colombia.



Fr. Provincial Thomas P. Greene, SJ, imposes hands on Fr. Louis Hotop, SJ.



Fr. Penn Dawson, SJ, vests Fr. James Page, SJ.



Fr. Daniel Mora's first consecration as a priest



The four new priests celebrate their ordination Mass with Archbishop Gregory Aymond.





**Father James R. Page, SJ**, was born and raised in New Orleans and attended Pomona College, where he was involved in a number of Bible study groups. He entered the Society of Jesus after college.

Father Page studied philosophy at Regis College at the University of Toronto. During his three years in Toronto, he also worked in catechetical programs, a L'Arche community and participated in a number of interreligious dialogues hosted by the university. After graduating, Fr. Page taught scripture at St. Louis University High School. He also helped in the school's retreat programs and started a Philosophy Club. He went on to earn his Licentiate in Sacred Theology at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, with a focus on Scripture. He was part of the RCIA program at St. Ignatius Church, and during his diaconate year, he worked at St. Michael's Church in Bedford, Mass.

Father Page's first assignment as a priest will be serving at St. Francis Xavier College Church in St. Louis and assisting in Saint Louis University's campus ministry.



Most Rev. Gregory Aymond anoints the hands of Fr. Brian Strassburger, SJ.



Fr. Christopher Kellerman, SJ



**Brian A. Strassburger, SJ**, was born in St. Louis, then lived in five states in his first 10 years until his family settled in Denver. He went to Regis Jesuit High School. After graduating

from Saint Louis University, Fr. Strassburger spent two years as an Augustinian Volunteer, then worked for the Augustinian Mission Office for two and a half years.

Following the novitiate, Fr. Strassburger earned a master's degree in international political economy and development at Fordham University and spent a summer working for Jesuit Refugee Service in South Africa. For his ministry experience, he was missioned to the Roncalli Association/John XXIII, a Jesuit-founded nonprofit in Managua, Nicaragua, where he helped with small business development projects in rural communities and ran a youth formation program.

Father Strassburger earned a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Theology degree at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. While in Boston, he served as the chaplain for the Boston College men's basketball team, a prison chaplain and a deacon at St. Mary of the Angels Parish.

After ordination, Fr. Strassburger will serve in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, to respond to pastoral needs in the area, with a particular focus on the migrant community.

Father Daniel Mora's photos are courtesy of Jeackson Vargas, SJ. Photos of the New Orleans ordination are by Bruce France and Matt Anzur.

# Healing the Scars of Violence: My Prison Ministry in Belize

By Ian Peoples, SJ



In my ministry as chaplain at Wagner's Youth Facility (WYF), a part of Belize Central Prison, I often speak one-on-one with the young men. Shortly after I began my work in November of last year, I had a conversation that I still think about often.

One of the young men, whom I'll refer to as Paul, had recently arrived at WYF and was having a rough transition. As I was speaking with Paul, I noticed what looked like a cut above his eye. I asked him about it. It turns out the "cut" was in fact a scar – one of many that marks Paul's body. The 16-year-old then went on to point out the host of other scars, mostly stab wounds and multiple entry and exit wounds from gunshots.

Then Paul told me a story about one of the scars left by a machete. Another teenager in the city threatened Paul, then actually cut him with

the machete. Paul thought he was going to die before his little brother managed to take the machete from Paul's attacker. Then Paul became the aggressor.

"I went to chop him, and he put his hand out, so I chopped down his hand," Paul described the

**"The mission of the reconciled sinner is the mission of reconciliation: the work of faith doing justice. A Jesuit freely gives what he has freely received: the gift of Christ's redeeming love."**

confrontation. "Then his girl got in front of me, so I chopped her. Then I chopped the boy in his head. Then my brother and I ran off," Paul said, before going quiet.

After a long pause, he asked me, "Have you ever done anything like that, Mr. Peoples?"

The reason I think about that story so often is not because of the graphic violence – there's plenty of that in the stories of the other boys – but that question to me at the end: "Have you ever done anything like that, Mr. Peoples?"

That question signals the norm of life on the streets of Belize City. This story, which would make headlines in the United States, is just part of life for these young men.

"Have you ever done anything like that?" echoes in my mind. The young men I meet in the prison were born into violent neighborhoods. Most, if not all, have severe childhood trauma from sexual, emotional or physical abuse, as well as regularly witnessing violent crime and its aftermath, like shooting victims lying dead in the streets.

In the face of these harsh realities, I sometimes wonder what I am doing

here. I don't have training to provide the therapy these boys need, nor am I by any means an expert in working with gang-involved people.

Fortunately, God uses these boys to pull my feet back to the ground, like when one of them asked during a group Bible study session, "Mr. Peoples,



isn't it true that you're going to hell if you kill somebody?"

It's that question that helps me remember what my mission is at the prison: to proclaim the loving mercy of God. I get to work to dispel the darkness of hopeless despair. I get to tell these boys that God is always ready to forgive; his arms are always open to receive them.

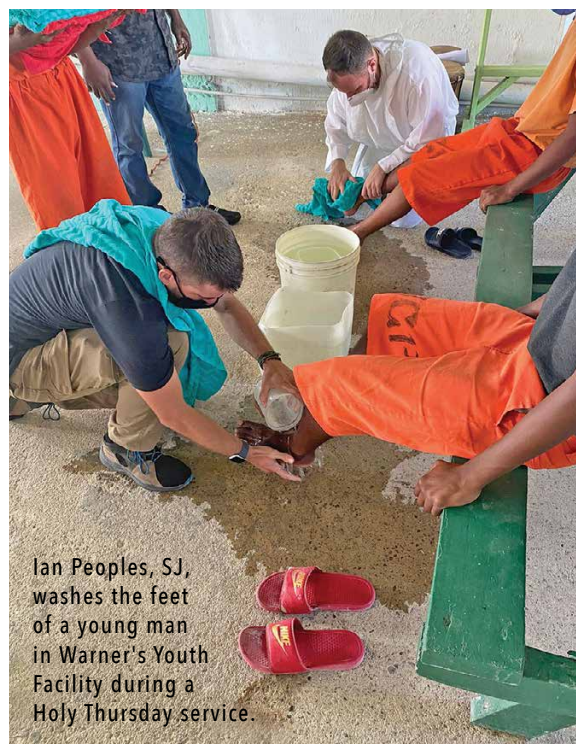
A document from the Society of Jesus' 34th General Congregation says, "The mission of the reconciled sinner is the mission of reconciliation: the work of faith doing justice. A Jesuit freely gives what he has freely received: the gift of Christ's redeeming love."

I get to proclaim that love every day at the prison. Among the other aspects of my ministry at WYF – literacy work, recreational activities, etc. – nothing is more important than sharing God's relentless love.

My ministry at WYF allows me to live out the Society of Jesus' Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) in a unique way. Guiding youth to a hope-filled future, one of the four UAPs, is central to my work at the prison.

I am humbled to stand in the place of Jesuits before me who have spent years in ministry at the prison, including our provincial, Fr. Tom Greene. It was his work that originally inspired me to consider doing my regency in Belize. During a province gathering a few years back, we sat together at one of the suppers. He was superior of our community in Belize at that time, and I could tell he loved the people of Belize by the way he shared stories about his work. That's when I realized, "Oh wow, Belize is part of our province! What might a regency there look like?"

Following the advice of Fr. Greene, I visited Belize during the summer of 2019 to get a sense of the place. During a brief two-week stay, I was able to put on a small soccer camp in one of the Mayan villages, do ministry with hospice patients in Belize City, lead communion services at our parish on the small island of Caye Caulker and visit WYF. The



Ian Peoples, SJ, washes the feet of a young man in Warner's Youth Facility during a Holy Thursday service.

thing that excited me the most during that visit was the sense of possibility. The possibilities for ministry in Belize are endless.

After being in Belize for almost eight months, that original excitement remains, though now it has been tempered by the sobering reality of the suffering so many people experience. That suffering, and the immense need for consolation and healing, is exactly why Belize is the right place for me, and the Society, to be.



Ian Peoples, SJ, prepares for a prayer service for the young men at Warner's Youth Facility in Belize.

# 2021 Jesuits in Formation

in the Central and Southern Province

## NOVICES



Nicholas Bernard



Jason Britsch



Beau Guedry



Max Landman



Stephen Lauer



Edgardo Morales  
Snyder

## The Path of Formation

**NOVITIATE** – two years learning about the Society of Jesus: how to pray, live in community and serve as a Companion of Jesus.

Jesuit novices in the USA Central and Southern Province enter the Jesuit Novitiate of St. Stanislaus Kostka at St. Charles College, in Grand Coteau, La. The two-year novitiate program culminates in the profession of perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

**FIRST STUDIES** – two to four years at a Jesuit university, usually studying philosophy while serving in part-time apostolic ministry.

**REGENCY** – three or four years working in a Jesuit apostolate, almost always a secondary school.

**THEOLOGY** – three years of graduate studies in theology, also with part-time apostolic ministry.

**TERTIANSHIP** – the final step in the formation process and the period of preparation before making final vows in the Society of Jesus.

## FIRST STUDIES



Reynaldo Belfort



Timothy Bishop



Nicholas Blair



Travis Crowe



Hunter D'Armond



Giovanni Díaz  
Jiménez



Brent Gordon



John Guerra



Richard Joubert



Justin Kelley



Manuel Luna  
Vega



Sullivan McCormick



Philip Nahlik



Chi Nhan Nguyen



Joseph Nolla



Joseph Seiter



River Simpson



Bryan Torres



## REGENCY



Peter Bell



Alex Coffey



Daniel Finucane



Joshua Hinchie



Jordan Jones



Marco Machado



William Manaker



Jeff Miraflor



Ian Peoples



Orlando Portalatin



Jorge Roque



Connor Smith

## THEOLOGY



Nicholas Courtney



Thomas Croteau



José Dueño



Daniel Everson



David Kiblinger



William  
McCormick



Michael Mohr



Jonathon Polce



Tucker Redding



Juan Ruiz



Aric Serrano

[www.BeAJesuit.org](http://www.BeAJesuit.org)

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Louis Hotop



Christopher  
Kellerman



Daniel Mora



James Page



Brian Strassburger

# FIDELITY AND PATIENCE MARK Fr. Anthony Corcoran's Pastoral Ministry IN KYRGYZSTAN

*By Michael Wegenka, SJ*

**I**n the summer of my first year of regency at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver, I boarded a plane at Dulles Airport outside of Washington, D.C., and caught connecting flights in London and Baku, Azerbaijan, before arriving at my destination: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. I had only the first name of a young woman who would greet me in the arrivals lounge once I passed through customs. Thus, I found myself sitting in a chair in an airport that was covered in letters of the Cyrillic alphabet in a former Soviet republic in Central Asia at 3:00 in the morning, waiting for someone named Nasikat to take me to a Jesuit community where I could get some rest.

What had brought me on this journey was a name I first heard many years before: Fr. Anthony (Tony) Corcoran, SJ. He was already something of a legend when I was a novice, and I had never forgotten the conversation we'd had while I was on a novitiate experiment in New Orleans. A few years later, after I took vows, he gave me advice about gratitude in a Subway restaurant in

Mississippi. Even then I could see he was a true missionary who lived out his Jesuit vocation with authenticity, and I frequently sought him out as a mentor and friend during those first years of Jesuit formation.

Tony was first missioned to the Russian Region of the Society of Jesus in 1997 and became the regional superior in 2007. In 2012, while in my first year of regency, I contacted him about the possibility of going to Russia for language study. He proposed Kyrgyzstan instead. Looking it up on a map for the first time, I found a country located west of China, south of Kazakhstan, east of Uzbekistan, and north of Tajikistan. It was 12 time zones away from Denver, so I could not have travelled farther away from home without starting to come back.

In 2017, Pope Francis named Tony the apostolic administrator of Kyrgyzstan, a small Catholic community spread out across a vast area made up of mostly mountains. In this assignment, Tony is now the ordinary (or head) of the church in Kyrgyzstan, which the Holy Father has entrusted to the care of the Society of Jesus. He functions in much the same capacity as a bishop and finds the unusual governing structure of apostolic



Father Remigiusz Kalski, SJ, director of the Children's Rehabilitation Center at Issyk-Kul Lake in Kyrgyzstan, joins Fr. Anthony Corcoran, SJ, in blessing the construction of a new building for the center.



administrator to be well-suited to a predominantly Muslim country with so few Christians.

“The Church generally creates the structure of Apostolic Administration when the resources of the Church are insufficient to justify construction of a diocesan structure,” Tony explained. “I am convinced that my becoming a bishop within the context of our tiny Christian communities and other aspects of the local society would not necessarily help me to better serve our people. Of course, the authority to make such a decision belongs solely to the Holy Father.”

There is perhaps something particularly Jesuit about the fact that Tony reports directly to Pope Francis and collaborates so closely with other Jesuits to provide the sacraments and material aid to the people of Kyrgyzstan. But his obedience to the Holy Father has led him far from home.

## The Grace of Being Small

Kyrgyzstan’s economy is based largely on agriculture and nearly one third of its population lives below the poverty level. In a population of nearly 6.5 million, fewer than 2,000 are Catholic.

When I first spoke to Tony on the phone in 2012, he told me that Kyrgyzstan is small. He described it as a “little flower” that was both easy to fall in love with and so delicate as to need especially attentive care. He recently described the Holy Father’s affection for these kinds of places.

“When we met with Pope Francis during the *ad limina* visit in 2019, he encouraged us leaders of the local Churches in Central Asia to understand that the Church here was really a *germoglio*,” Tony said. “During our



Father Anthony Corcoran, SJ, was among the Church leaders who met with Pope Francis in an *ad limina* visit.

common reflection, we drew out the significance of what it means to be this ‘bud’ or ‘sprig.’ The Holy Father also spoke about how God especially loves to work through the very small.”

I understood this as a willingness to labor without any guarantee of immediate and lasting fruits or benefits. Instead, the work in such small places begins discreetly and waits patiently for growth in God’s time.

For Tony, this faithful patience is something that he first recognized in the people he ministered to in Russia.

“When I first arrived in the former Soviet Union to serve, I was frequently struck by the level of fidelity of many Christians to their faith in Christ and His Church in spite of unimaginable challenges and persistent persecution,” he said. “I met people who had longed to receive the sacraments for decades, even when there seemed little likelihood that this would ever be possible. If those first years of

ministry in Siberia and in other places in the former Soviet Union introduced me to remarkable Christian witness, my current assignment demands a newer mode of evangelization within an extraordinarily complex situation.”

When Nasikat greeted me in the arrivals lounge of the airport in Bishkek, I realized that living in Kyrgyzstan would require me to become small, too. This was first reflected in the necessity of bending my six-foot-three frame under the showerhead in my new home in Bishkek, that was only a few feet off the ground. I couldn’t help but laugh at how humbling this was for a foreigner who had just arrived in a much “smaller” world.

I learned to conduct myself humbly by asking for even the most basic things, typically through the universal language of pointing and making facial expressions to convey what my words could not.

A primary reason for my journey to Kyrgyzstan was to learn Russian, and my inability to speak the language ultimately meant that much of my time there was spent in silence. At one point, it struck me as being similar to being on a silent retreat. I became increasingly more attuned to what was going on within and around me as time progressed.

I did most of my speaking during the English lessons I taught to young men and women at a summer camp near what can only be described as a great lake in the eastern part of the country, Lake Issyk-Kul. My students were intensely interested in anything I could tell them about American culture. These conversations in English opened to them a larger world that they had only seen images of on television screens or their phones. It soon became clear that this big, American world was clamoring mightily for their attention – all the way across 12 time zones and thousands of miles of land and sea.

## Pandemic Impact

Kyrgyzstan locked down for two months last spring because of the coronavirus pandemic. Since then, the country has experienced a political uprising and passed through wave after wave of illness and economic hardship. However, the pandemic has also invited new engagements between Christians and Muslims that would not have been possible before. The tremendous needs of the poor demand collaboration among groups that would have otherwise been unlikely to work together.

However, the pandemic did little to arrest the perennial issue of the emigration of many Kyrgyz people to Russia and Europe. Even my own ministry of teaching English likely helped prepare some of my students to one day emigrate to another country where they may be better able to lift themselves out of the poverty that is so common in Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the challenges and hardships that so many of his people face, Tony is quick to point to the even greater graces he sees each day.

“The sincerity of faith in many of our people remains striking,” he said, citing a recent visit to villages to celebrate the sacraments of confirmation and baptism after an absence of more than a year. “I found myself once again moved, somehow even surprised, in witnessing the evident consolation on the faces of family members as they prayed the Creed and during and following the reception of these Sacraments. I subsequently have often meditated on these faces ... and on the surprising fact that God still causes this sense of ‘wonder’ in His pastors.”

The faces of the Kyrgyz church continue to give lasting encouragement to the Jesuits who have travelled so far to be with them.

## Coming Home

Toward the end of my time in Kyrgyzstan, I had an opportunity to travel up a mountain valley with a group of teenagers. Along the idyllic mountain path that wove in and out among streams and tall grass, we came upon a Kyrgyz farmer who lived in the valley and milked his horse to sell to those who happened along. The horse milk he offered us (known as “kumis”) was fermented, and he and the teenagers I was travelling with laughed heartily at my face when I took the first sip. It is, I suppose, something of an acquired taste. It was a moment, nonetheless, when I most felt like one of them, drinking the same beverage that had nurtured the people of Central Asia for centuries.



Father Tony Corcoran, SJ, confirms a young Catholic in Kyrgyzstan.





With a small Catholic population, many churches in Kyrgyzstan are intimate spaces.

Just a few days later, on the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, I celebrated an early morning Mass with the Jesuit community in Bishkek. I then boarded a plane back to Baku, then to London and finally to Denver. Returning to the United States, I attended a late evening Mass on the same feast day of St. Ignatius with my Jesuit community in Denver. Thanks to those 12 time zones, I enjoyed a 36-hour-long feast day on opposite sides of the world and was left to reflect on how much I was at home in both because of the common bonds I shared with the Jesuits in each.

When I asked Tony recently about where he feels at home these days, he answered it in the most Jesuit way possible. “For most of us, this is not meant to be such a difficult question, since we can endeavor to be ‘at home’ precisely where we have been assigned to serve.”

Nevertheless, it is still the case, he said, “that all of us Jesuits can agree with the conviction that there are certain essential elements of the Jesuit vocation that demand not only continuous recommitment / re-animation,

but which in effect define the quality and vibrancy of our Jesuit lives.”

This *availability* that first brings a Jesuit across the world to serve as a missionary must be renewed each day regardless of where he finds himself working.

“As I was preparing to depart for Siberia as a young Jesuit priest, one of the elderly Jesuit missionaries I met advised me to continuously beg from God the grace to ‘fall absolutely in love’ with the people to whom I was being given and even to love their language and culture. He called this – along with a deep trust in and abiding love of Christ and His Church – the most important grace of a missionary. Almost a quarter of a century later, I remain amazed at the wisdom of this advice – and at the inexplicable generosity of God in hearing this ongoing and sometimes difficult prayer.”

It is clear that Tony has indeed fallen in love with the people of Kyrgyzstan and made his home among them. “The nature of my assignment as apostolic administrator – pastor – of these specific

people – entails a commitment to remaining with them. ‘Their fate must become my fate!’ as one of my friends remarked.”

Tony’s future in Kyrgyzstan will be decided by ecclesial leaders and by the playing out of political events in the country. In the meantime, he is attempting to apply for Kyrgyz citizenship and trying to learn the Kyrgyz language, the primary tongue of most people in this country.

“Feeling at ‘home’ here is not such a big problem,” he says, “since apparently God really does love to work through the small – and because He answers prayers.”

May God continue to bless the Kyrgyz people with the grace of fidelity and many more Jesuit missionaries to carry on the work of the Holy Father in Central Asia.



**Father Michael Wegenka, SJ**, currently serves as director of pastoral ministry and teacher of English at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School in Houston.

# Province Office of Secondary and Presecondary Education Holds “Care for the Caregivers” Event

By Jerry Duggan

The pandemic has been a trying time for educators and parents alike, testing their roles as partners in education. Parents became more involved as homes became classrooms, but teachers were there to help parents with the transition to virtual learning. Likewise, teachers were able to rely on the backing of school administrators. But who was backing up administrators? Who was taking care of the people who, in many situations, are “caregivers” for their school communities?

The provincial assistants for secondary and presecondary education and their associates in the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) and USA Midwest (UMI) Provinces asked that question and were not satisfied with the answer.

So, the four province representatives decided to create an event for presidents and principals of middle and high schools in each province to “check in” amid the stresses the pandemic has added to an already difficult job.

The four-member planning group consisted of Ron Rebore, UCS provincial assistant for secondary and presecondary education (PASE); Ken Luecke, UCS associate PASE; Matt Couture, UMI PASE; and Brendan Conroy, UMI associate PASE.

In line with the Jesuit concept of “*cura personalis*” – care for the whole person – the virtual event focused on three aspects of health: mental, spiritual and social. It was held on three consecutive Wednesdays in January.

Each day included an opening prayer, an introduction and a talk by one of three speakers – Fr. Michael Garanzini, SJ, president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and a member of the UCS Province; Dr. Lisa Damour, renowned psychologist, bestselling author and New York Times columnist; and Fr. Timothy Lannon, SJ, treasurer of the UMI Province.

Fathers Garanzini and Lannon each brought a wealth of experience as Jesuit educators, and Dr. Damour brought the experience of having a Jesuit educator in the family: her husband teaches at St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland.



Fr. Michael Garanzini, SJ, president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, encourages school leaders to care for their spiritual well-being.

Dr. Damour felt this was a worthy addition to her already busy schedule because she understands the value of Jesuit education.

“I wanted to be supportive of Jesuit educators because I know the good work that they do,” she said. “My talk was about supporting and empathizing with the administrators and all the high stress situations they have experienced in navigating the challenges of the last year.”

Each week’s message was well-received by the participants, who came from schools all over the UCS and UMI provinces. As many as 48 participants attended each session, and their continued attendance throughout the three-week series showed that it was impactful, according to Luecke.

“The fact that our administrators continued to show up every week, engage with the speaker and ask questions shows that it was a success,” he said.

Rebore believes what made the event most meaningful was the fact that each speaker had experience as (or as a spouse of) a Jesuit educator.

“We needed speakers who could relate to the challenges our administrators have faced, because those are experiences that you can’t really relate to unless you’ve lived them yourself,” he said. “Because of their own experience, our speakers were able to present in a way that was most meaningful to our administrators.”

The UCS and UMI PASE offices plan to hold a similar event next year, based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback they received.



# Passing of a Former Missionary Signals End of an Era

By *Therese Fink Meyerhoff*

**A**n important moment in Jesuit history quietly came to an end on March 9 when Fr. Lloyd Anthony Lorio, SJ, died in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. He was 93 years old, a Jesuit for 77 years and a priest for 64 years. He was the last surviving Jesuit missionary of the New Orleans Province who joined the Trincomalee-Batticaloa Mission, which later became the Province of Sri Lanka.

"We are grateful to God for the life of Fr. Lorio, who always worked tirelessly for the social, spiritual and educational upliftment of the people wherever he was, especially the youth," Fr. Angelo Sujeewa Pathirana, SJ, socius of the Province of Sri Lanka, wrote to Fr. Provincial Tom Greene, SJ. "He was a quiet man, a man of simplicity, with great dreams to serve the people in varying capacities and in innovative ways."

Originally a member of the New Orleans Province, Fr. Lorio went as a missionary in 1951 to what was then known as Ceylon. When the mission became the Vice-Province of Ceylon in 1962, Fr. Lorio became a part of it.

The Trincomalee-Batticaloa Mission was an important apostolic work for the New Orleans Province. The Southern Jesuits took over the mission from the French Province of Champagne in 1946 – the first mission entrusted to American Jesuits following the Second World War.

Sri Lanka is an island of approximately 25,000 square miles in the Indian Ocean off the tip of India. When the Southern Jesuits took over the mission, the territory they served had a population of about 250,000, primarily Hindus and Muslims. Catholics were a small minority.

The local language was Tamil, a challenge for the American missionaries to learn. As Jesuits John W. Lange and Theodore A. Ray reported in the Woodstock Letters of November 1946, Tamil was difficult because of the pronunciation and the "great difference between the spoken tongue and the written language."



A young Lloyd Lorio, SJ, yearned to serve in the missions in Ceylon.

In the Batticaloa District, the Jesuits ran St Michael's College, Manresa Retreat House and ten mission stations (churches or chapels). In the Trincomalee District, the Jesuits oversaw St. Joseph's College, which included a minor seminary for Jesuit candidates; a diocesan minor seminary, the Cathedral and five mission churches.

In 1962, when the mission became the Vice-Province of Ceylon, it was staffed by 53 Jesuits, a mix of Ceylonese and American missionaries: a bishop (Ignatius Glennie, SJ),

**"He was a quiet man, a man of simplicity, with great dreams to serve the people in varying capacities and in innovative ways."**

– Fr. Angelo Sujeewa Pathirana, SJ

31 priests, 16 scholastics and five brothers. Most of the members of the mission were transcribed (transferred) into the vice-province, including Fr. Lorio. Bishop Glennie, three priests and three scholastics remained members of the New Orleans Province, but in subsequent years, Bishop Glennie and three other priests were transcribed to Ceylon.

Father Lorio was buried at Alayadicholai Catholic Cemetery in Batticaloa, following a funeral at the Cathedral. We give thanks for him and for all Jesuit missionaries.

# Jonathon Polce, SJ: Following God's Plan One Step at a Time

By Jerry Duggan

Growing up in a large Catholic family in small-town Connecticut, Jonathon Polce, SJ, was homeschooled for his K-12 education before attending the University of Dallas, a Catholic institution. After graduating in May 2009 with a bachelor's degree in history, Polce found work as a resident assistant at UD's Rome campus.

One of the chaplains at the Rome campus happened to be a Jesuit, the first Jesuit Polce had ever met. In time, he became Polce's spiritual director. Polce began to discern whether he was called to a religious vocation.

"I started to consider religious life, but had a lot of fears," Polce said. "I wondered about how a religious vocation would impact my relationships with family and friends and worried that I was called to have a

wife and children. It seemed like such a huge commitment."

While weighing his options, Polce returned home for Christmas in 2010. While there, he had a transformative conversation with his father, who had returned to the Faith several years before, after years of not practicing.

"He encouraged me to pursue a religious vocation and got that message through to me by reframing my anxieties about the long-term commitment as, 'Is this what God is calling me to do right now?'"

"Once I saw a religious vocation through that new lens – of being a 'next step' in following God's plan as opposed to worrying about lifelong implications – I made up my mind," Polce said.

In making that decision, he put Pope Francis' words into action: "Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey."

When he returned to Rome for the spring semester, Polce informed his spiritual director that he had decided to pursue a religious vocation. Over the previous year, Polce had gotten to know the Jesuits through his spiritual director, so he wanted to explore a vocation in the Society of Jesus.

Polce entered the novitiate in the fall of 2011. After two years of novitiate, he studied philosophy at Regis College in Toronto, completed his ministerial assignment teaching at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory of Houston and is currently studying theology at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

He hopes to be ordained to the priesthood in June 2022.

Initially daunted by the length of the Jesuit formation process, Polce has found it to be one of the greatest blessings in his vocation, for it has allowed him to focus on following God's plan, one step at a time.

"The Jesuit formation process is intentional," he said. "Every step of the way, I have been given assignments where the Lord has pushed and stretched me, and come out of each experience a better man, a better Catholic and a better Jesuit."

In his active ministry, Polce is excited about many possibilities: returning to an educational setting, going abroad again and incorporating food – he has a passion for cooking – into his ministry.

But he has now learned not to worry about what is far ahead, remaining focused on what God has planned as his next step.

"I can't wait to be ordained a Jesuit priest," he said. "Whatever ministries that God has in store for me, it will be a blessed adventure."



Jonathon Polce, SJ, in Rome with a group of students from Strake Jesuit



# Planning for Pandemic: Public Health Expert Fr. Michael Rozier, SJ, Was Prepared for the Unthinkable

By *Therese Fink Meyerhoff*



Photo Credit: Steve Dolan, Saint Louis University

It's safe to say that before the last quarter of 2019, the circle of people who had given significant thought to pandemics was relatively small. Father Michael Rozier, SJ, was among that group. He spent seven months of his Jesuit formation at the World Health Organization, working on ethics and international health issues. He has a Ph.D. in health management and policy and teaches courses in global health and in ethical leadership in health care. So, when SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) – commonly called COVID-19 – was declared a pandemic – Fr. Rozier was in demand.

“Over the past year, people have justifiably felt more anxious. Whenever I can give resources to help reduce anxiety and help people be informed and not act out of fear – that’s the best,” he said. “I have been trained well by the Society of Jesus and I am grateful for those moments when I can give back.”

Father Rozier was busy even before COVID-19. He teaches both graduate and undergraduate students at Saint Louis University, writes about ethics in health care and accommodates frequent speaking requests. In the past year, he also advised the leaders of this

province on how to respond to the pandemic effectively and ethically.

In the meantime, he adapted his courses to highlight real-time issues. “In past semesters, we would discuss things like the ethical allocation of ventilators, or whether employers had the right to require vaccinations,” Fr. Rozier said, noting that students often found those discussions farfetched. But, in the past year, “I got messages from former students thanking me for those conversations, saying they were the only members of their staffs who had ever considered these ethical issues. It was pretty gratifying.”

In the future, this past year is likely to be a case study for students in health sciences. Father Rozier says the most important question at this point in the pandemic is not about PPE allocation or vaccination requirements, but “How do we not fear our fellow person?” He wants to encourage Americans to approach this question realistically, acknowledging that some people might pose risks, but that fear mongering and “othering” is destructive.

“I encourage open conversations and honest relationships,” he says. “If you’re not comfortable asking

someone if they’re vaccinated, you’re probably not close enough to spend time with them in close proximity. We as a people of faith need to put energy into how to be hopeful and bridge divisions, such as those we’ve seen in the past year. We want to be models of how not to fall victim to the ways of the world.”

Father Rozier has been impressed by the creative energy demonstrated by people working in schools, parishes and retreat centers. “In some of our parishes, we have more people attending evening programs on Zoom than we had attending in person (before the pandemic). This is wonderful in the way it helped to create a sense of community, but we don’t want to become ‘too virtual,’” he said. “As in all things, these innovations are good in how they help us achieve our desired end.”

Like the rest of us, Fr. Rozier is looking forward to the day when the coronavirus is not as topical as it is now. “Very few academics want to be relevant in real time,” he said. “We in public health would welcome becoming less relevant.”

# “The Leader We Needed:”

## *Fr. Fred Kammer Retires from Jesuit Social Research Institute*

By MegAnne Liebsch



*“St. Ignatius talked a lot about engaging the world, and our [work at JSRI] is about engaging the world’s dark side and hopefully pointing out places of light and hope.”*

At 76, Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ, has accrued a larger-than-life reputation in Jesuit circles.

His career reflects a singular love for God and for justice. For the past 12 years, Fr. Kammer has poured that devotion into the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) at Loyola University New Orleans. A joint project of the university and the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province, JSRI addresses issues of poverty, race and immigration in the Gulf South through research, education and advocacy.

Father Kammer’s assignment at JSRI came to an end this spring.

Father Kammer founded JSRI while provincial of the former New Orleans Province and has led it as executive director since 2009. The author of the bestselling *Doing Faithjustice*, he has shaped its mission

based on Catholic social teaching, always through the lens of Ignatian Spirituality.

“St. Ignatius talked a lot about engaging the world,” says Fr. Kammer. “And our [work at JSRI] is about engaging the world’s dark side and hopefully pointing out places of light and hope.”

Over the last 15 years, JSRI has published dozens of studies evaluating education, economic opportunity, incarceration and quality of life in the Gulf South region. Using this data, JSRI staff publish reports, compile policy recommendations for state and national legislation, give testimony in state legislatures, or meet with U.S. congresspersons to push for policies that would reverse inequities.

Achieving policy change is a powerful source of “light and hope” in JSRI’s work, Fr. Kammer says.



“Fred has a great ability to analyze legislation and then to connect the issues to Catholic social teaching,” says Fr. Thomas P. Greene, SJ, who worked at JSRI under Fr. Kammer and now serves as provincial of the UCS Province. “His ministry over the years shows what ‘the service of faith and promotion of justice’ look like when lived out in the Jesuit vocation.”

## Tracing Fr. Kammer's career before JSRI

Father Kammer graduated from Jesuit High School, New Orleans, where his Jesuit teachers were attuned to the civil rights issues of the day. He was deeply influenced by Fr. Louis J. Twomey, SJ, who taught about racism, worker's rights and Catholic social thought.

When he entered the Society in 1963, Vatican II had just opened, and its revelatory teachings shaped his formation as a Jesuit. He felt called to the vision of a “modern church” that stood with its people against unjust governments and social systems.

Early in his ministry, he worked as a poverty lawyer at legal aid organizations in Atlanta and Baton Rouge, before becoming an official for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. With a goal of getting congregations involved with social justice movements, he developed a column for the diocesan paper about Catholic social teaching and current events. He continues to write such a column today.

In 1992, he became president of Catholic Charities USA. The position took him to charities across the country, where he gave lectures on faith, justice and advocacy. He aimed to form advocates, encouraging charities to identify policy reforms that would help the communities they served.

## Founding JSRI

In 2002, Fr. Kammer was named provincial of the former New Orleans Province (now part of the UCS Province). At the top of his to-do list was establishing a center for social research and analysis.

Hurricane Katrina interfered with those plans.

In the wake of the storm, Fr. Kammer approved the distribution of resources to all Jesuit ministries — even those not formally sponsored by the province — so that they could stay open.

“He was the leader that we needed at the time to get through Katrina,” says Mary Baudouin, who worked for the New Orleans Province and now serves as provincial assistant for social ministries for the UCS Province.



Katrina and its aftermath crystalized Fr. Kammer's vision of how the Jesuits could address social problems in New Orleans and the South through research and advocacy.

“The New Orleans Province at the time was the poorest,” Baudouin says. “The region had a huge number of migrants, and racism was just so prevalent. Fred asked, ‘What can we do about that? How can we put the resources of the Jesuits to address those basic problems?’”

Father Kammer threw himself into fundraising for what became the Jesuit Social Research Institute. When his term as provincial ended, his successor named him executive director. Under his direction, JSRI carved out a singular authority on social analysis through the lens of Catholic social teaching. It is a point of pride for Fr. Kammer.

“It's very clear in the work we do and in the writing we do, that we hew pretty closely to Catholic social teaching,” he says.

“He saw that he could share that knowledge of Catholic social teaching, that commitment to social and economic and racial justice with a younger generation,” Baudouin says. Father Kammer was a founding member of Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) South and has served on the boards of JVC and the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

Now, after nearly two decades, Fr. Kammer is not overly sentimental about leaving JSRI. True to form, he's approaching his retirement with meticulous planning and preparation, digitizing over a decade's worth of notes — in case they're helpful for the next director.

For Fr. Fred Kammer, Catholic social teaching is more than a constitution to memorize. It's a compass that directs his actions and choices. He's embedded that same compass in JSRI, where it will continue to point the way to justice after he's gone.



**MegAnne Liebsch** is the communications manager for the Office of Justice and Ecology of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. She holds an MA in Media and International Conflict from University College Dublin and is an alumna of La Salle University.

# The Teacher

by Jason Schlude

Ignatius was a soldier  
of Christ  
with bifocals  
like the windshield  
of the lumbering  
Ford Galaxie  
from my childhood  
a few grey threads  
resting on his head  
borrowed  
you would think  
from his bare  
but initialed cardigan  
if not for  
its soft yellow  
a lonely flash of color  
upon black  
excepting  
his rosy cheeks  
cradling a smile  
from beyond the horizon  
but happiest with you  
whoever you were  
even freshmen

an anthropologist  
he dedicated his life  
to humanity  
Austin doctorate  
in big-knuckled hand  
scholar of Carib  
language and culture  
his Mr. Clean phase  
as I thought it  
a faded photo  
remembering him  
tall and bald  
thick muscles  
resting under skin  
radiant white  
in Belize's summer sun

he exchanged  
cutting university gems  
for mining iron ore  
in quarries  
of my high school  
he taught us  
nouns and adjectives  
verbs and adverbs  
prepositions  
all ordered by gentle  
gesticulations  
of hands  
quaking up close  
but painting  
like an impressionist  
before a class  
in the air  
on the board  
following the melody  
of his voice  
the conjunction  
joining grammar's points  
to one another  
to literature's beauty  
to god writ-large  
in human words

he taught us  
Mark Twain  
tapes rolling of his voice  
shifting dialects  
he taught us  
William Shakespeare  
how poetry  
begs for speech  
wishing entry to hearts  
maybe even elusive  
souls  
tongue to ear  
not just through eyes  
he helped us  
find our poetry  
however lost  
mismatched  
mine still hammered  
by typewriter

he gave clothes  
where needed  
like a reindeer sweater  
in September  
line of bulls plowing  
through snow  
vanishing into seam  
he wore a crumpled  
faded Royals hat  
to old Busch Stadium  
Cardinals playing  
anyone but  
a sea of red waves  
reflecting sunset  
but for a stubborn  
speck of blue



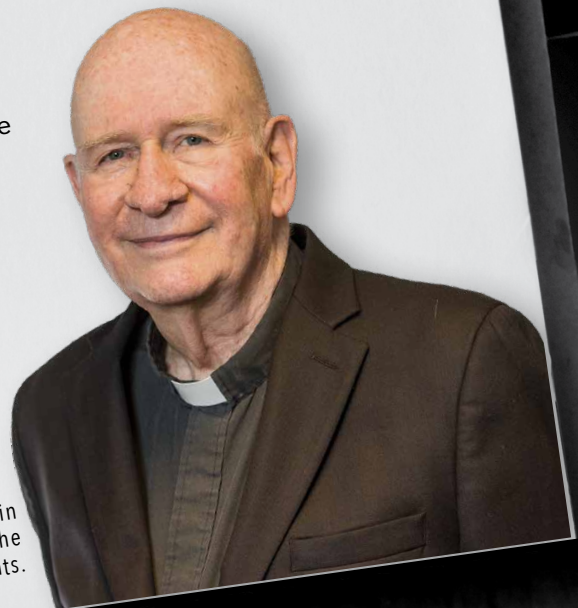
he made the ordinary  
extraordinary  
declaring an era  
of Gentle Wednesdays  
teaching a thousand boys  
fag has no entry  
in Christ's dictionary  
all are invited to table  
all called  
to play parts in his story  
to fast from unkindness  
even if born  
only of posturing

whom else  
would you ask  
why do you believe  
his answer  
was the unexpected  
his faith practical  
making room for others  
he believed  
to see parents again  
prayed  
Lord  
I believe  
help my unbelief  
as he helped mine

for years  
his classroom was center  
a weekly pilgrimage  
but now it dwells  
within  
entered daily in mind  
heart and prayer  
Ignatius knew  
the language of  
humanity  
its unpredictability  
contradiction  
he flourished  
in its unlikelihood  
carrying us  
into the unknown  
ad maiorem dei gloriam  
for god's greater glory.

he was a teacher  
in the image of Antolini  
Salinger's sage  
made flesh  
seeking a humble life  
of principle  
not noble death  
companion fame  
the teacher  
college students visited  
who might send a book  
Tuesdays with Morrie  
where you found  
your Ignatius  
certain the sacrifice  
was undeserved  
yet for this Morrie  
everyone was deserving

he taught forgiveness  
every day since  
I closed that chapter  
every day as  
I imagine  
he found words  
to write the next  
forgotten  
in communication  
words of love  
but he likely  
never felt wronged  
expected nothing  
his vocation  
to remember those  
who forgot



Father Dick Hadel, SJ, taught at several Jesuit schools in the U.S. Central and Southern Province and served as the inspiration for this poem by one of his former students.

JASON SCHLUDE is associate professor of classics and chair of the Department of Languages and Cultures at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University in Minnesota.

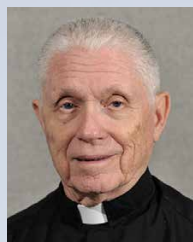
His manuscript *We Lived among the Bones* reflects upon the experience of growing up in a farm-meets-labor family in St. Louis in the late 20th century. His poetry has appeared in *Pericles at Play*. A former Getty scholar, he is an ancient historian and archaeologist who specializes in the Roman Near East and published *Rome, Parthia, and the Politics of Peace: The Origins of War in the Ancient Middle East* (Routledge, 2020). A member of the *Avon Hills Salon* (<https://avonhillssalon.com>), he engages in public scholarship that explores the significance of Classical antiquity for the modern world. His articles have appeared in *Foreign Policy Journal*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *The Activist History Review*, and *Bible History Daily*. He can be reached at [jschlude@csbsju.edu](mailto:jschlude@csbsju.edu).



# IN MEMORIAM

*Lord, have mercy on these men, for they believed in the resurrection of the dead. Grant them a place of refreshment, light and peace in your presence.*

## Father Bert Mead, SJ



Father Bert Mead, SJ, died Jan. 20, 2021, in Grand Coteau, La. He was 91 years old, a Jesuit for 71 years and a priest for 58 years.

Bert Mead entered the Jesuit Novitiate in Grand Coteau on July 1, 1949, after serving for two years in the Florida National Guard. After earning his Ph.D. in psychology, he taught that subject at Spring Hill College and Loyola University New Orleans. In the 1970s, he worked for Catholic Social Services and for the tribunal of the Diocese of Lafayette, La. He then turned to pastoral work, serving in states from Florida to Alaska, and even a semester in Kenya. He retired to a ministry of prayer in 2004.

## Father John H. (Jack) Zupez, SJ

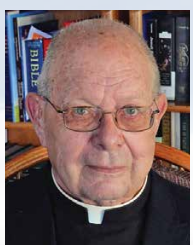


Father Jack Zupez, SJ, was committed to social justice, always looking for ways to promote it in his teaching and his pastoral work.

Born in St. Louis, he entered the Society of Jesus after graduating from St. Louis University High School. After completing theology studies, he was missioned to teach at a series of Jesuit high schools: Rockhurst High School, De Smet Jesuit High School, Georgetown Prep, Scranton Prep, St. Louis University High, Fairfield Prep and St. John's College. In 1997, Fr. Zupez was missioned to Africa, where he taught theology at several seminaries. He returned to the United States in 2006 and served in pastoral ministry in several locations, with his final assignment as a prison chaplain in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo.

He died Feb. 21, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 84 years old, a Jesuit for 66 years and a priest for 53 years.

## Father E. Eugene Arthur, SJ



Father Gene Arthur, SJ, died March 24, 2021, in Wheat Ridge, Colo. He was 85 years old, a Jesuit for 67 years and a priest for 54 years.

He began his teaching ministry in two Jesuit high schools, but later served for more than 20 years at Rockhurst College (now University). He taught economics and management, always encouraging his students to "think outside the box and dream big." With the new millennium came a new ministry, and he moved to Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat House in Sedalia, Colo., to preach retreats and do spiritual ministry. He remained until 2017, when he moved to Denver to continue his spiritual ministry until his death.

## Father Paul B. Steinmetz, SJ



Father Paul B. Steinmetz, SJ, is recalled as a warm, kind and gentle man who had an abiding love for the Lakota people and was devoted to their traditions and practices.

He served most of his active ministry at the Holy Rosary Mission/Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He also served in pastoral ministry at parishes in Florida, California and Wisconsin. He was a gifted writer and published a number of articles and books.

He was the younger brother of Fr. Ricardo Steinmetz, who spent almost all of his Jesuit life in ministry in Mexico.

Father Steinmetz died on April 14, 2021, in Wauwatosa, Wisc. He was 92 years old, a Jesuit for 74 years and a priest for 61 years.

## Brother Robert L. Aug, SJ



Brother Bob Aug, SJ, was a Jesuit brother in the old tradition – hard-working, prayerful and unassuming. After pronouncing first vows, he remained on at

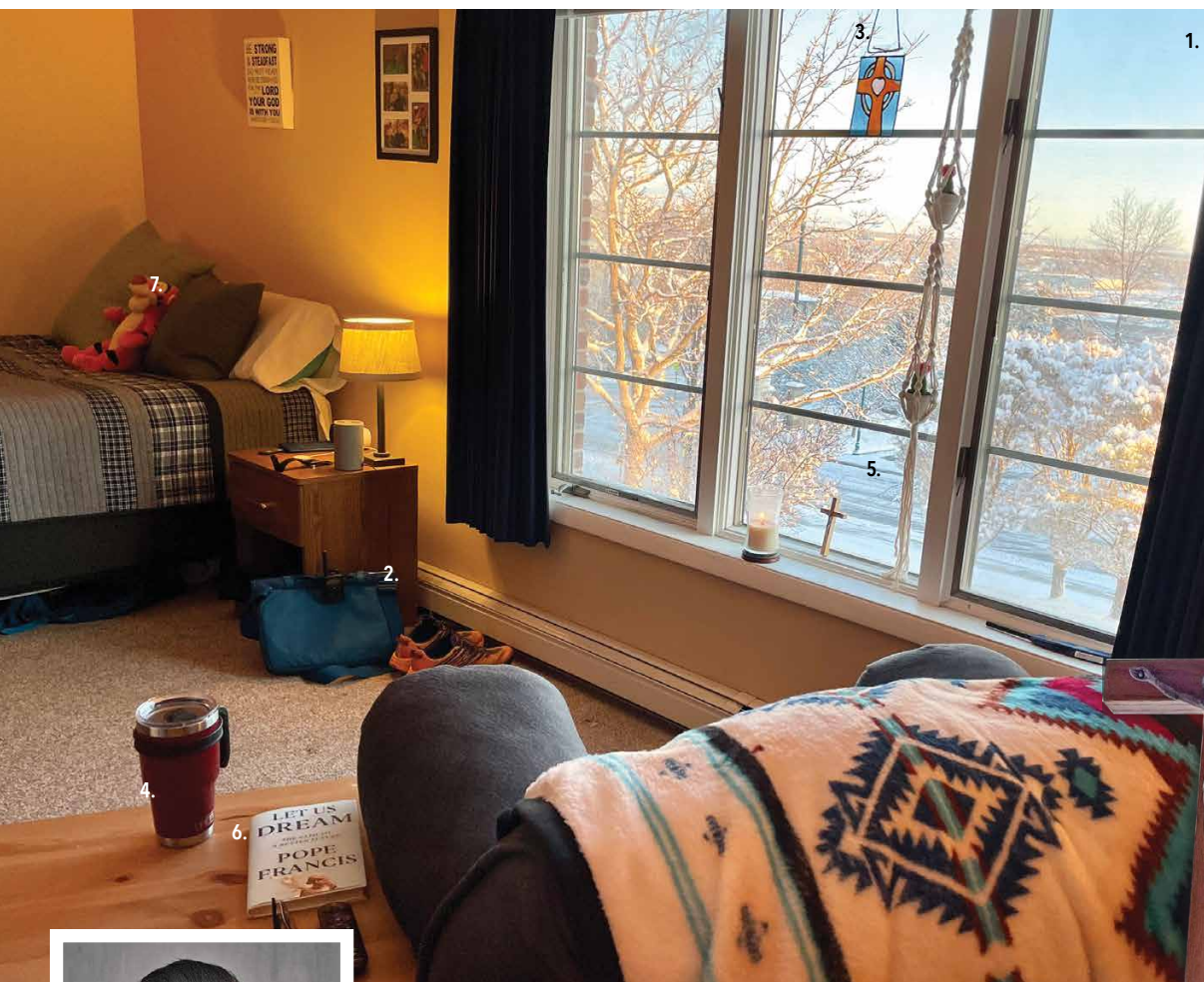
St. Stanislaus Seminary in Florissant, Mo., in order to work as an electrician. He later worked as a carpenter at the theologate in St. Marys, Kansas. When St. Mary's College closed in 1967, he was sent to St. John's College in Belize City, Belize, where he remained for 20 years. There, he maintained the community's automobiles – no easy feat with parts hard to come by in the Central American country. He also provided pastoral service to the remote villages along the Northern Highway of the country. After returning to the United States in 1986, he served at Bellarmine House of Studies and Jesuit Hall in St. Louis.

Br. Bob Aug, SJ, died April 21, 2021, in St. Louis. He was 91 years old and a Jesuit for 68 years.

**MORE**  
ON THE WEB

For complete obituaries, visit the province website: [www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/in-memoriam](http://www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/in-memoriam).





## FATHER MARCUS FRYER, SJ, is a busy guy.

His primary assignment is as pastoral director at Arrupe Jesuit High School in Denver, with additional responsibilities as vocation promoter for the Denver area, consultant for his Jesuit community and an advisor to the province's new Office of Ignatian Spirituality. He's also a pretty awesome son, brother, uncle and friend. Despite his busy-ness, he always makes time for prayer. We asked him to share his prayer space with us.

### 4. TEXAS A&M MUG

As a Gulf Coast resident (Houston), I have to have my Yeti with me at all times – and in Denver it's always full of water so I don't dry out living at 5,280 feet.



### 5. WOODEN CRUCIFIX

This is the same cross that I used as a freshman retreat leader at Strake Jesuit when I was a senior in high school.

### 6. LET US DREAM

Pope Francis' book is not only a great read, but it really helped me find material to use with our students during the pandemic.

### 7. TIGGER THE TIGER

When I was growing up, my dad used to call me Tigger because I was full of energy. I got my nephew and me matching Tiggers to put on our beds when he was born (and then one for my niece), and now each time we talk on FaceTime, our Tiggers have a chat as well.

### 1. ROOM WITH A VIEW

I love my bedroom because it offers an incredible view of the mountains. And I set my prayer space specifically so I could enjoy that view each morning.

### 3. STAINED GLASS CROSS

My 5-year-old nephew made this for me at his school.

### 2. RUNNING SHOES

My routine involves getting up and either running or going to the gym, coming home to pray, and then heading off to school.



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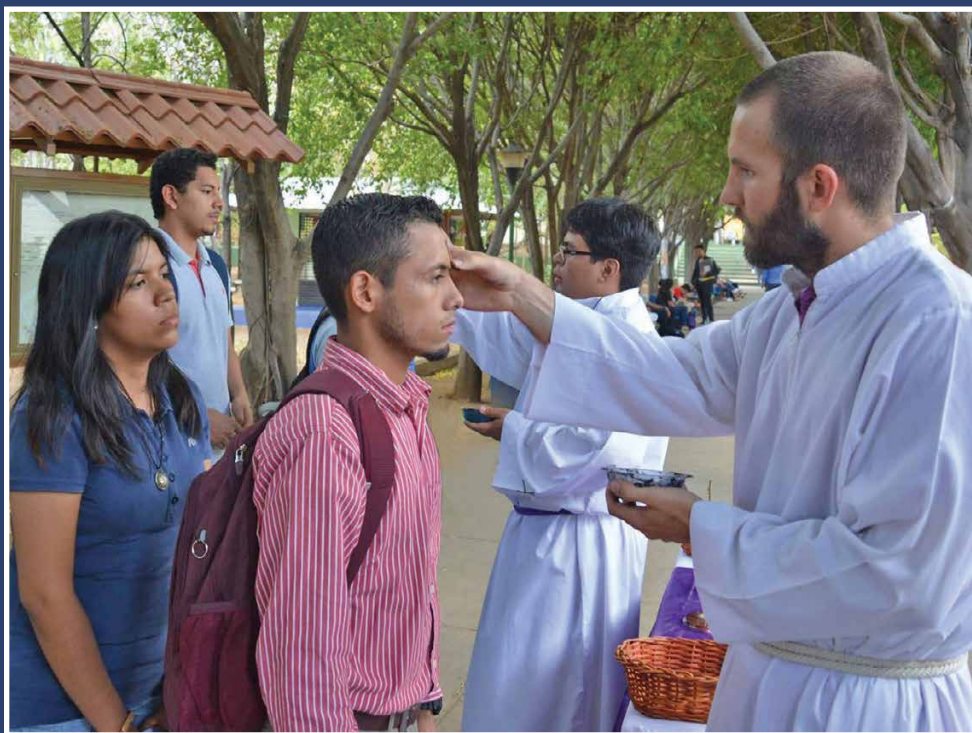
## *Thank you for your support of our men in formation!*

### You help form Jesuits.

As a newly ordained priest, I am overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude. My ten years of Jesuit formation have been immensely rich. To all the donors who have helped to support this journey, I offer a heartfelt “thank you.”

My words feel insufficient, and so I will continue to put my gratitude into action by offering myself in ministry to the service of the Gospel.

– Brian A. Strassburger, SJ  
Newly ordained priest



*Brian Strassburger, SJ, (above) distributes ashes to students at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), in Managua, Nicaragua on Ash Wednesday, 2017, during his regency.*



*Brian with fellow Jesuit Danny Gustafson at their diaconate ordination in September 2020.*